



THE POLAR BEAR

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POLAR BEAR



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THE POLAR BEAR

FAR away in that wonderful land, where the Esquimaux have their home, where the day is as dark as the night during a great part of the year, and there is nothing all around but ice and snow, a pure white bear is to be found. And his name is not the Grizzly Bear,



nor the Brown Bear, but the Polar Bear. That is because his home is in the Polar regions.

He is a great big fellow, very strong, a splendid swimmer, and a swift runner. There is a fierce, cruel look in his eyes. You would never think there was any fun in him. Yet a great traveller, who lived long amongst the Esquimaux, tells that



he used to watch the Polar Bears having a glorious time sliding down ice-covered rock, just the way boys slide on banisters.

It is not always easy for these bears to find food. They like fish best, but when that is not to be had, Mr. Bear goes prowling about, living on moss or lichen, or sometimes stealing from the Esquimaux. One



clever rascal managed to
carry off a whole barrel of herrings that
he had no right to touch!

Bear-hunters are helped by
dogs specially trained for the pur-
pose. Carefully keeping Mr. Bear
from getting away, they never get into actual
fight with him, but gradually drive poor Bruin
into a corner and surround the animal, till the



hunter with his spear brings
life to an end for him.

The Esquimaux, you see, have to learn to
be cunning and clever in hunting
the bear and the walrus, for they
depend upon them for food and
clothing. The walrus lives in the water, and
sometimes is caught just rising at the side of an
iceberg. And, alas, sometimes a father and mother



walrus, with their little ones, are sporting on the ice, when a lance or harpoon in the hunter's hands brings their enjoyment to an end.

After the ice has melted at the end of the summer, the walrus take to the rocks, and it is not easy to catch them then, they are so watchful. But the Esquimaux know all about their haunts, and with harpoon



and line down they come upon the animals, and carry them off to their poor little snow-covered huts.

The Esquimaux are plump, little people. very fond of all sorts of fat and blubber. The children are not a bit particular what they eat. Raw liver is a tit-bit to them, and when they catch a bird they never think of having it cooked, but devour



it, leaving nothing but the
poor feathers and bones.

Away up under the cliffs a bird called
the auk makes a nest. It is a
favourite food of the little Esqui-
maux. Off a boy will go, with his
purse net of sealskin at the end of a narwhal's
tusk, and in a few minutes he will have as many
of the baby auks as he can carry home.



Clad in bearskin and well accustomed to cold, they have great fun in the open air. Their playthings are much like yours, and though their sledges and shinty-sticks are roughly made, the sport they have is capital. Inside their huts there is no room for fun and no room even for beds. They just lie on the floor.

The great whaling ships that go to the Arctic



regions often weather through terrible times amidst the icebergs. Such a monster as the whale, you can imagine, is not easy to capture. But he is well worth all the trouble. The bone alone is very valuable, and sometimes "the case," as sailors call the upper portion of a whale's head, will contain enough oil to fill ten barrels.

About one-third of the entire length of a



whale forms the head, and when swimming rapidly the "leviathan of the deep" has his head alternately above and below the water. The monster is no sooner in sight than all on board the whaler is ready for action. A cool-headed captain and capable crew are needed to cope with it, for not without great effort is Mr. Whale made captive.

Some of the bergs that surround these ships



rise more than 500 feet above the surface of the water. So, you see, they have to be sturdy and strong. And the sailors have to be prepared for the most desperate cold. To have a hand or foot frost-bitten is no uncommon occurrence, and a voyage to the land of the Polar Bear is never just a pleasure trip, though it is full of interest.





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